



OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA
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Un partenaire fiable de la sécurité communautaire

Feedback

Message to the Community from Interim Chief Steve Bell

Posted On Monday March 07, 2022

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, March 7, 2022 10:00 am

(Ottawa) – This past month, the people of Ottawa have faced immense disruptions, fear, and uncertainty due to the illegal protests in our city. That was followed by significant changes in leadership, both at the Ottawa Police Services Board and within the Ottawa Police Service.

It is natural that questions are asked about the direction of the Ottawa Police, and it is important that we respond to those questions directly.

I am writing you as the Interim Chief to make clear our commitments to the community.

We are and will remain an organization focused on cultural and systemic change.

We have built an experienced and diverse leadership team to help deliver this change.

Commitment

Together with the community, we will rebuild public trust, continue to address systemic racism and violence against women, promote equity, diversity and inclusion, increase diversity-focused hiring and contribute to our communities through neighbourhood policing.

We will continue building our partnerships and remain committed to our learning journey with marginalized, Indigenous, Black, Faith, Racialized, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities, and address the real change those communities demand.

We will not abandon plans and strategies jointly made with the community through consultations and conversations.

In particular, we are affirming our commitment to the development and implementation of call referral and call diversion processes for situations involving mental health and addictions and the development of gender- and diversity-sensitive responses to domestic and intimate-partner violence.

We continue to acknowledge that racism and sexism exist in policing. That marginalized, Racialized, Black, Faith, and 2SLGBTQA+ communities have real grievances and legitimate concerns about policing.

I want to re-affirm our commitment to continue to reach out to them to develop approaches collaboratively and respectfully to policing to earn their trust.

Moving Forward

We are working to be better, and we know we have a lot of work to do. Through our work with the community, we also recognize that we have already made many gains and taken steps to improve trust, increase collaboration, build partnerships, and look for new ways to serve our residents more equitably.

I want to thank Chief Sloly for his leadership. He shared the progressive view of many in our organization and in policing across the country that our institution needs to change. Our culture needs to be more inclusive. We are at our best when we reflect the community we serve and respond to its needs.

I am re-affirming our Service's commitment to fully engage in the innovative, responsive, partnership-based work we have undertaken. I have been reaching out to community leaders to ensure they know that our door is always open, and as a community partner, we are here now and always.

We will also continue to work with the Community Equity Council, a partnership we value.

We will also be implementing new actions and measures, including:

- Co-development of a use of force review committee comprised of police and community members to review reports on police use of force incidents
- a new, diverse hiring class that is representative of our community
- hiring an equity and race data specialist to continue previous efforts to increase reporting on police data (such as traffic stops and arrests) and building a community data hub for increased data transparency, and
- continuing internal investigations relating to inappropriate police member conduct related to the illegal protests

We cannot do this alone

The past weeks have shown the vital role of policing in our society and the different expectations of police in our community.

You have my commitment that we will continue to pursue cultural and systemic change with the same focus.

We know that we cannot do this alone. We value and need the partnership and input of our City and community leaders, marginalized voices and communities, and all residents of Ottawa who count on and rely on our services.

We best move forward when we work together.

You have my commitment that we will proceed with a progressive agenda that leads us to where the community wants us to be. We have a diverse community in Ottawa, and we will need to come together, as a community, to determine the best role of our police service.

I am proud to be a part of the Ottawa Police Service and proud of the people I work with as much as I am proud of my Ottawa community. We care about the community and want to be the police service this community deserves.

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